

COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
Regular Meeting – November 13, 2023, 3:00 PM

73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Conference Room 101
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Tele-conference location:
State of California, Resources Agency
715 P St.
Serpentine Room on the 20th floor (NRHQ 20-103)
Sacramento, CA 95814

AGENDA

1.0 Call to Order & Introductions

2.0 Approval of September 11, 2023, Meeting Minutes (See Attachment 1.)

3.0 Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

At this time, any member of the public may address the Governing Board on any item not on the agenda. The Board cannot act on an item not on the agenda, but it can place it on the agenda for a future meeting. For items on the agenda, there will be an opportunity to speak when that item is heard. The Chair may limit the time for each speaker. Any written material may be submitted to the person taking minutes.

4.0 Closed Session

Pursuant to Government Code sections 11126 (a)(1), 11126(e)(1) and 11126.3(a) the Board may hold a closed session to discuss and take possible action on personnel matters and or receive advice of counsel on pending or potential litigation. In addition, pursuant to Government Code section 11126(c) 7(A) the Board may meet in closed session with its negotiator prior to the purchase or sale of real property by or for the state body to give instructions to its negotiator regarding the price and terms of payment for the purchase or sale. Confidential memoranda related to these issues may be considered during such closed session discussions. The matters scheduled for closed sessions are:

No closed session is scheduled.

5.0 Action Items - Public Hearing (if there is any member of the public who wishes to address the Governing Board before action is taken, testimony from the public will be taken prior to a vote.)

5.1 Approval of Meeting Schedule for 2024. (See Attachment 2.)

5.2 Consideration of Requests for Proposals Wildfire Resilience Local Assistance Grants. (See Attachment 3.)

5.3 Adoption of Resolution 2023-17 consenting to and approving the donation by the Friends of the Desert Mountains of one parcel in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. (See Attachment 4.)

5.4 Adoption of Resolution 2023-18 in Support of the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and expansion of Joshua Tree National Park. (See Attachment 5.)

5.5 Presentation on CVMC social media. (See Attachment 6.)

6.0 Reports

6.1 Written Reports from Staff. (See Attachment 7.)

6.2 Executive Director Report.

- Trail Project Status

6.3 Board Member comments and reports from Conservancy member agencies. This is an opportunity for any of the Governing Board Members to present a report on matters on interest regarding the agency he or she represents.

7.0 Adjourn to the January 8, 2024, meeting at 3:00 pm.

This Agenda is available on our website at <http://cvmc.ca.gov>. Anyone with questions about any item on the agenda may contact the Conservancy by phone at (760) 776-5026 or by visiting our office located at 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120, Palm Desert, CA 92260.

ATTACHMENT 1 – November 13, 2023

Agenda Item 2.0 COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

REGULAR MEETING
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 101
Palm Desert, California
September 11, 2023 - 3:00 p.m.

Tele-conference location:
State of California, Resources Agency
715 P St.
Serpentine Room on the 20th floor (NRHQ 20-103)
Sacramento, CA 95814

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrew Ahlberg, California State Parks
Rebecca Fris, Wildlife Conservation Board
Steve Downs, City of Rancho Mirage
Gary Gardner, City of Desert Hot Springs (*Chair*)
Beatriz Gonzalez, State Assembly Appointee
Elaine Holmes, City of Indio
Richard Kim, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Rita Lamb, City of Cathedral City (*Vice Chairwoman*)
Sally Lukenbill, Department of Finance
Deborah McGarrey, City of La Quinta
Andrea Scharffer, Natural Resources Agency
Evan Trubee, City of Palm Desert
Bruce Whitman, City of Indian Wells

MEMBERS ABSENT: Denise Delgado, City of Coachella
Christy Holstege, City of Palm Springs
V. Manuel Perez, Riverside County
Savana Saubel, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
Joan Taylor, Governor's Appointee
Christopher Tracy, University of California, Riverside
Ellen Lloyd Trover, Senate Rules Committee Appointee

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Karpiak, Executive Director
Diana Rosas, Associate Director
Maximiliano Ochoa, Project Coordinator
Abriana Elms, Administrative Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT: Vincent James, U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Aaron Leider, Oswit Land Trust
Tammy Martin, Friends of the Desert Mountains
Bryan Montgomery, City of Indio
Oscar Ortiz, Friends of the Desert Mountains
Jose Ramirez, City of Indio
Ginny Short, Center for Natural Lands Management
Lynn Sweet, UC Riverside

1.0 Call to Order & Introductions

Chair Gary Gardner declared a quorum with 12 voting members present at 3:06 p.m. Subsequently, 1 additional board member arrived after the roll call bringing the attendance to 13 voting members.

2.0 Approval of May 8, 2023, Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2023, meeting; the motion passed with 3 abstentions.

3.0 Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

No public comments were made.

4.0 Closed Session

No closed session was scheduled for this meeting.

5.0 Action items – Public Hearing

5.1 Overview of Revised Climate Resilience & Community Access Proposals and Recommendations for Grant Awards.

Gary Gardner asked the board whether it would prefer separate staff presentations and roll call votes on each of the recommended grants or instead one longer staff report followed by a vote on all the grant resolutions. Hearing no objections, Gary asked the staff to proceed with one staff presentation.

Jim Karpiak summarized item 5.1 as presented in the staff report and requested any direction from the board.

There were no comments or questions from board members or the public.

Jim Karpiak, Executive Director gave a brief overview of the 4 projects being proposed for funding. As to item 5.3, Jim noted that we have two board members,

Joan Taylor and Deborah McGarrey, who also serve on the Friends board, but the attorney general has advised that as unpaid board members of a nonprofit organization, no conflict exists so no recusal is required.

As to item 5.5, Bruce Whitman asked if CVMC will get regular updates from UCR, and Jim responded that the grant agreement will require them, along with several other deliverables during the course of the project. These can be made available to board members upon request. Jim added that the agreements for the other projects being funded have require regular reporting requirements. Richard Kim asked what the social interventions will be; Lynn Sweet responded that they will included signage, directives, recreational behaviors and physical barriers. Andrew Ahlberg asked what the rubric is for judging the impacts. Lynn responded that the social scientist could speak better to that, but for the most part they would be evaluated by surveys. The physical impacts would be addressed by the ecologist, and include such items as shrub cover, land disturbance, trails, litter, plant biodiversity and lizard biodiversity. Andrew asked if that is done randomly and what the time period is. Lynn responded that this would be done in a subset of areas North Palm Springs, Palm Desert and East Indio Hills area looking at different user groups. Vincent James from the US Fish and Wildlife Services in Palm Springs asked if UCR would be looking at the impact it also has on the Peninsular Big Horn Sheep. Lynn responded that this study would not do so.

A motion was made and seconded (Gonzalez/Trubee) approving the following:

- 5.2 Adoption of Resolution 2023-11 Approving a Climate Resilience & Community Access Program Local Assistance Grant to the Friends of the Desert Mountains for its Native Planting Education Project.
- 5.3 Adoption of Resolution 2023-12 Approving a Climate Resilience & Community Access Program Local Assistance Grant to the Friends of the Desert Mountains for its Land Acquisition and Management Project.
- 5.4 Adoption of Resolution 2023-13 Approving a Climate Resilience & Community Access Program Local Assistance Grant to the Oswit Land Trust for its Sustainable Land Management Project.
- 5.5 Adoption of Resolution 2023-14 Approving a Climate Resilience & Community Access Program Local Assistance Grant to the University of California, Riverside for its Assessing the Urban Interface in the Coachella Valley Project.

The motion passed unanimously.

5.6 Adoption of Resolution 2023-15 Approving an Infrastructure Grant from Proposition 68 Local Assistance Grant Program to the Center for Natural Lands Management for its Restroom Replacement Project in the Coachella Valley Preserve.

Jim Karpiak summarized Item 5.6 as presented in the staff report. Ginny Short with the Center for Natural Lands Management was also in attendance and available for questions.

Andrew Ahlberg asked what the outlook is for the currently closed Parking lot to be opened soon. Ginny Short responded that Hurricane Hillary created additional damage, and at this time CNLM does not have the funds to repair or replace the parking lot. The Preserve is working with the County to make the sides of the roads safer and accessible. Evan Trubee asked if the damage to the parking lot was prior to the storm. Ginny responded that the parking lot was already, damaged but Hurricane Hillary created additional damages making it harder to access. Ginny also added that additional entrance gates have been installed to facilitate parking further down the road.

A motion was made and seconded (Trubee/Holmes) approving an Infrastructure Grant from the Proposition 68 Local Assistance Grant Program to the Center for Natural Lands Management in an amount not to exceed \$91,000 for its Restroom Replacement Project. The motion passed unanimously.

5.7 Adoption of Resolution 2023-16 Approving an Infrastructure Grant from the Proposition 68 Local Assistance Grant Program to the City of Indio for Parking Improvements at the East Indio Hills Trailhead.

Elaine Holmes, City of Indio Councilmember, recused herself as a board member of the Conservancy and did not participate in the consideration of the grant to the City of Indio.

Jim Karpiak summarized item 5.7 as presented in the staff report. Bryan Montgomery and Jose Ramirez of the City were also in attendance and available for questions.

Andrew Ahlberg asked if the Parking Improvements include Interpretive signage. Bryan Montgomery commented that bilingual, interpretive signage would be installed. Richard Kim asked what plants are being cleared to create the parking

lot. Bryan Montgomery responded Desert Shrub & Creosote but noted that it was pretty sparse since the lot has been graded before. Bruce Whitman asked how many spaces the parking lot will create. Bryan responded that the finalized specs are unknown at this time, but they anticipate 60-65 spaces. Steve Downs asked how many parking spaces there are now. Bryan stated that there are roughly about 12 parking spaces. Deborah McGarrey asked if the city will consider installing a gate to close the area during severe storms. Bryan responded that the city would consider that.

A motion was made and seconded (McGarrey/Ahlberg) approving an Infrastructure Grant from the Proposition 68 Local Assistance Grant Program to the City of Indio in an amount not to exceed \$150,000.00 for Parking Improvements at the East Indio Hills Trailhead. The motion passed unanimously with one recusal.

5.8 Approving the Annual Budget of the Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for Fiscal Year 2023-24.

Jim Karpiak summarized item 5.8 as presented in the staff report.

There were no comments or questions from the board.

A motion was made and seconded (Whitman/McGarrey) approving the FY 2023-24 work plan and budget of the Authority as detailed in Exhibit A to the Staff Report. The motion passed unanimously.

5.9 Discussion of Options for Distributing Wildfire Resilience Local Assistance Grants.

Jim Karpiak summarized item 5.9 as presented in the staff report.

Rita Lamb asked if CVMC would be reaching out to Cal Fire and or other local fire entities for their input on which areas are in need. Jim responded that we have not yet done so but could do so later, although we don't envision Cal Fire or local fire departments as likely applicants for these funds since they have access to other, larger sources. Evan Trubee asked about the removal of invasive species and how that would be staffed. Jim responded that the grantees would probably reach out to local conservation corps. Deborah McGarrey asked about fuel reduction such as dead plant debris, and Jim responded that definitely is intended to be eligible and would be called out in the RFP. Bruce Whitman asked about the administrative workload and what the process entails. Jim responded that it would include

reviewing applications, keeping track of funds, enforcing grant agreements, providing technical assistance and more. Richard Kim stated that the Department of Fish and Wildlife also received Wildfire Resilience funds and said that he would be available to coordinate with the conservancy in these efforts.

6.0 Reports

6.1 Written reports from staff.

There were no questions or discussion from the Board.

6.2 Executive Director Report.

Jim Karpiak reported on the following:

- Operations Update- Jim introduced Maximiliano Ochoa as the new AGPA/Project Coordinator at the Conservancy effective September 1st. Jim added that Max will start working on the Proposition 68 grants program and in time will move on to some of the other grant programs.
- Trail Project Status- Shumway is mostly complete, with only road repairs remaining to be done. The existing trail works project is moving on to the Palm Springs and Palm Desert Trails. Lastly the joint NEPA/CEQA Environmental Assessment is now awaiting BLM review; it has been there since February and is likely to be delayed until 2024 or later. We are considering separating the four trails that do not affect federal and completing the CEQA work on them so that we can begin work on some of the trails.

Tammy Martin mentioned she can provide contact information for the new interim director at BLM to help move this project along.

6.3 Board Member comments and reports.

There were no further questions or comments from the board.

7.0 Adjourn to the November 13, 2023, meeting at 3:00 pm.

Chair Gary Gardner adjourned the meeting without objection at 3:59 pm

ATTACHMENT 2 – November 13, 2023

Agenda Item 5.1 Approval of Meeting Schedule for 2024

January 8

March 11

May 13

July 8

September 9

November 18

All meetings begin at 3:00 p.m.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the proposed meeting schedule for 2024.

ATTACHMENT 3- November 13, 2023

Agenda Item 5.2 Consideration of Requests for Proposals Wildfire Resilience Local Assistance Grants.

BACKGROUND

In the FY 23-24 state budget, the Conservancy received an appropriation of \$9.0 million from the General Fund for projects that promote wildfire and forest resilience. The Conservancy's existing Climate Resilience & Community Access Grant Program Guidelines (Guidelines) sets forth the process for distributing general fund appropriations. At its September meeting, the board provided guidance to staff on the priorities for grants using these funds. Staff has prepared requests for proposals (RFPs) for three different types of grants for consideration by the board, which are attached as Exhibits A, B and C below.

DISCUSSION

The three separate categories of grants seek focused applications addressing the most significant types of risks of destructive wildfire that staff has identified in the Coachella Valley: (i) Invasive species removal and fuel reduction in conservation areas, (ii) tribal fire suppression and prevention programs; and (iii) fire suppression and prevention programs in economically disadvantaged communities. The recommended distribution of funds among the categories is based on an estimate of the capacity of potential grantees to use the money efficiently but expeditiously. Finally, the deadlines for applications are staggered somewhat to allow more time for outreach to potential applicants serving tribal and disadvantaged communities as well as to keep the review process manageable but thorough. A summary of the three RFPs follows:

RFP 2023-01: Wildfire Resilience Projects in Implementation of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP)

- \$ 4 million available, minimum grant amount of \$2 million;
- Eligible projects must implement invasive plants removal, fuel load reduction and/or native plant restoration contemplated by the CVMSHCP and within the scope of the 2008 & 2014 EIR/EIS documents for the CVMSHCP;
- Local agencies or nonprofits are eligible applicants;
- Preference for one collaborative project under lead agency with capacity to manage effort;
- Not for federal land;
- Project duration: up to 4 years; and
- Application deadline: February 16, 2024.

RFP 2023-02: Tribal Wildfire Resilience Projects

- \$ 2.5 million available, no minimum grant amount;
- Eligible projects: contributing to fire suppression/prevention on or adjacent to tribal land: fuel load reduction, invasive plant removal, native plant restoration, fire break construction, acquisition of suppression equipment such as tractors, radios, etc., or prevention infrastructure or educational programs;
- Eligible applicants include tribes or nonprofits that are affiliated with tribes or that primarily serve tribal communities;
- Collaboration encouraged, not required;
- Project duration: up to 2 years; and
- Application deadline: March 15, 2024.

RFP 2023-03: Wildfire Resilience Projects in Economically Disadvantaged Communities

- \$ 2.0 million available, no minimum grant amount;
- Eligible projects: contributing to fire suppression/prevention in economically disadvantaged or severely economically disadvantaged communities in reducing the risk of wildfires in WUI or mountainous areas: fuel load reduction, invasive plant removal, native plant restoration, fire break construction, acquisition of suppression equipment such as tractors, radios, etc., or prevention infrastructure or educational programs;
- Eligible applicants include local or state agencies, tribes, or nonprofit organizations that primarily serve “economically disadvantaged communities” (defined as communities with median household income less than 80% of the area median income or AMI);
- Collaboration encouraged, not required;
- Project duration: up to 2 years; and
- Application deadline: April 13, 2024.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests that the board approve issuance of the three RFPs for the Wildfire Resilience funds to be awarded as part of the Climate Resilience & Community Access Grant Program.

Exhibit A

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy



Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant Program

Funded by the State of California General Fund

Request for Proposals CRCA 2023-01: Wildfire Resilience Projects in Implementation of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan

November ____, 2023

Pre-Application Deadline: January 19, 2024

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 776-5026
www.cvmc.ca.gov

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (the “Conservancy”) is pleased to offer up to \$4.5 million in local assistance grants as part of its latest request for proposals under its Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant Program (“Program”). The Program was created in 2021 and seeks to support programs that address climate adaptation and resilience or enhance access to outdoor recreation or education. Further details about the Program can be found in the Program Guidelines available on the Conservancy’s website. This RFP CRCA 2023-01 seeks to strengthen wildfire resilience in implementation of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (“CVMSHCP”).

RFP Objectives

The Conservancy worked on the development of the CVMSHCP and since its adoption in 2008 has coordinated land acquisition efforts to create the reserve system required under the CVMSHCP. Various public entities and nonprofits that own and manage land within that reserve system of more than 109,000 acres. Many parts of the reserve system contain significant quantities of invasive species of plants and dry fuel that pose a significant risk of wildfire, which risk is increasing with climate change. The CVMSHCP includes a management program that prioritizes removal of invasive species and the restoration of native ones, but that work has only been partially implemented due to funding challenges. This RFP seeks to address that by offering grants to fund planning and/or implementation projects that address critical needs in implementing the CVMSHCP, including but not limited to the following:

- Removal of invasive plant species and the restoration of native species that provide benefits such as increasing biodiversity;
- Prescribed burns;
- Threat assessments, mapping projects, biological and cultural surveys, development of restoration plans, fire or forest management plans or related environmental compliance and permitting;
- Creation and maintenance of shaded fuel breaks; or
- Acquisition of wildland equipment for ongoing management such as command vehicles or trailers, tractors, drones, woodchippers, hand tools, etc.

Grant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include local or state agencies, federally- or California state-recognized tribes, or nonprofit organizations that own or manage conservation land under the CVMSHCP. Collaborative projects led by an agency with documented land management experience are preferred.

The minimum grant amount is \$2.0 million.

CEQA compliance will be required prior to the Conservancy's board acting on grants that are not otherwise exempt from CEQA review. Projects that are part of the ongoing management program included under the CVMSHCP and within the scope of the 2007 EIR/EIS adopted for the CVMSCHP as supplemented in 2014 will be strongly preferred. The details of CEQA as it applies to each application will be discussed as part of the Pre-Application review.

The Conservancy specifically encourages applications that provide contracting opportunities to residents of local economically disadvantaged communities or use locally based urban conservation corps programs.

Projects that include federally owned land are NOT eligible.

Application Process and Key Dates

Steps	Task	Deadlines
1	Applicant Submits Pre-Application (attached below)	Friday, Jan. 19, 2024
2	CVMC Notifies Applicant of Full Application Eligibility Status	Friday, Jan. 26, 2024
3	Applicant Submits Full Application	12:00 Noon Friday, Feb. 16, 2024
4	CVMC Reviews and Scores Full Applications	Feb - March, 2024
6	CVMC Conservancy Board Considers Applications.	March or May, 2024
7	Grantee Commences Grant Project Upon Grant Agreement Execution	

Applications will be reviewed, scored and ranked in accordance with the competitive process established by the Guidelines, with final awards to be made by the Conservancy Board. The Board reserves the discretion to award available funds in this round of funding based on the strength of responses to this RFP. The Conservancy reserves the right to modify this RFP by written addendum posted to our website and emailed to our RFP list. Awards are conditioned on the continuing availability of funding under the State Budget.

Further Information

All CRCA Grant Program documents, are available for review at www.cvmc.ca.gov. If you have questions, please contact Jim Karpiak, CVMC Executive Director at jkarpiak@cvmc.ca.gov, or Diana Rosas, Associate Director at drosas@cvmc.ca.gov, or call (760) 776-5026.

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy



CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM

Funded by the California General Fund

Grant Proposal Pre-Application Form

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 776-5026
www.cvmc.ca.gov

We fully understand that your project information may be preliminary and subject to change. Our main purpose is to understand what you hope to accomplish with program funding. Pre-application submissions will be reviewed by CVMC staff and may follow up with questions, comments, clarifications as needed. Applicants whose projects are deemed eligible will be notified with further instructions as to completing the full application narrative.

1. Name of Applicant(s):
2. Representative and contact information:
3. Please attach a brief, one-page project description that summarizes key objectives, work tasks and deliverables.
4. Was the project part of any other project that has undergone environmental review under CEQA or NEPA? _____ If so, please identify the project and type of environmental document.
5. Please attach a map that depicts the location of the project or the areas to be served.
6. Does the applicant own the project site? _____ If not, how will you achieve site control?
7. Tentative amount of funding to be requested? \$_____. Please attach a summary budget.
8. Do you have, or are you seeking, other funding for the project? _____ Projects that provide at least 20% in matching funds are priorities for funding.
9. Does the project serve *severely disadvantaged communities* (i.e., with median household incomes of less than 60 percent of the statewide average)?
10. Would conservation corps services be appropriate for your project (if appropriate)?

Further Information

All CRCA Grant Program documents, are available for review at www.cvmc.ca.gov. If you have questions, please contact Jim Karpiak, CVMC Executive Director at jkarpiak@cvmc.ca.gov, or Diana Rosas, Associate Director at drosas@cvmc.ca.gov, or call (760) 776-5026.

Exhibit B

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy



Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant Program

Funded by the State of California General Fund

Request for Proposals CRCA 2023-02:

Tribal Wildfire Resilience Projects

November __, 2023

Pre-Application Deadline: February 2, 2024

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 776-5026
www.cvmc.ca.gov

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (the “Conservancy”) is pleased to offer up to \$2.5 million in local assistance grants as part of its latest request for proposals under its Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant Program (“Program”). The Program was created in 2021 and seeks to support programs that address climate adaptation and resilience or enhance access to outdoor recreation or education. Further details about the Program can be found in the Program Guidelines available on the Conservancy’s website. This RFP CRCA 2023-02 is focused on strengthening wildfire resilience in tribal communities.

RFP Objectives

The Conservancy currently seeks applications for projects or programs that support California Native American tribes in reducing the risk of wildfires on reservations or ancestral lands, implementing Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) where possible, enhancing wildfire safety for tribal communities and restoring native plant species to improve long-term habitat values and lower fire risk. Grants may fund planning and/or implementation projects that address critical needs in tribal communities, including but not limited to the following:

- Threat assessments, mapping projects, biological and cultural surveys, development of restoration plans, fire or forest management plans or related environmental compliance and permitting;
- Creation and maintenance of shaded fuel breaks;
- Pre-fire management practices such as fuel load reduction, dead and dying tree removal, understory thinning and/or removal, tree or other native and/or traditional vegetation plantings;
- Removal of invasive plant species and the restoration of native species that provide benefits such as increasing biodiversity or improving access to traditional foods and culturally significant species;
- Cultural and prescribed burns;
- Workforce development, training and certification programs in fire, forestry, or related TEK;
- Improvement of water infrastructure to enhance firefighting or suppression capacity or development or evacuation alert systems;
- Acquisition of wildland equipment such as command vehicles or trailers, tractors, drones, woodchippers, portable pumps, backup generators, radios, hand tools, etc.; or
- Education or public outreach activities are designed to promote fire prevention and safety in rural or wildland urban interface communities.

Grant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include federally- or California state- recognized tribes or nonprofit organizations that are affiliated with tribes or primarily serve tribal communities.

There is no minimum application amount, and the maximum is \$2.5 million. CEQA compliance will be required prior to the Conservancy's board acting on grants that are not otherwise exempt from CEQA review. The details of CEQA as it applies to each application will be discussed as part of the Pre-Application review.

Any project that fulfills one or more of the objectives of this RFP is eligible for consideration, but the Conservancy specifically encourages applications that:

- (a) Collaborate among tribes or organizations to enhance implementation capacity;
- (b) Serve areas that have historically experienced wildfires or that are otherwise documented to be at high risk;
- (c) Meet more than one objective of the RFP; or
- (d) Maximize tribal community and resident participation.

Projects on federally owned land (other than land held by the BIA in trust) are NOT eligible.

Application Process and Key Dates

Steps	Task	Deadlines
1	Applicant Submits Pre-Application (attached below)	Friday, Feb. 2, 2024
2	CVMC Notifies Applicant of Full Application Eligibility Status	Friday, Feb. 9, 2024
3	Applicant Submits Full Application	12:00 Noon Friday, Mar. 15, 2024
4	CVMC Reviews and Scores Full Applications	March - April, 2024
6	CVMC Conservancy Board Considers Applications.	May 2024

Applications will be reviewed, scored and ranked in accordance with the competitive process established by the Guidelines, with final awards to be made by the Conservancy Board. The Board reserves the discretion to award available funds in this round of funding based on the strength of responses to this RFP. The Conservancy reserves the right to modify this RFP by written addendum posted to our website and emailed to our RFP list. Awards are conditioned on the continuing availability of funding under the State Budget.

Further Information

All CRCA Grant Program documents, are available for review at www.cvmc.ca.gov. If you have questions, please contact Jim Karpiak, CVMC Executive Director at jkarpiak@cvmc.ca.gov, or Diana Rosas, Associate Director at drosas@cvmc.ca.gov, or call (760) 776-5026.

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy



CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM

Funded by the California General Fund

Grant Proposal Pre-Application Form

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 776-5026
www.cvmc.ca.gov

We fully understand that your project information may be preliminary and subject to change. Our main purpose is to understand what you hope to accomplish with program funding. Pre-application submissions will be reviewed by CVMC staff and may follow up with questions, comments, clarifications as needed. Applicants whose projects are deemed eligible will be notified with further instructions as to completing the full application narrative.

1. Name of Applicant(s):
2. Representative and contact information:
3. Please attach a brief, one-page project description that summarizes key objectives, work tasks and deliverables.
4. Was the project part of any other project that has undergone environmental review under CEQA or NEPA? _____ If so, please identify the project and type of environmental document.
5. Please attach a map that depicts the location of the project or the areas to be served.
6. Does the applicant own the project site? _____ If not, how will you achieve site control?
7. Tentative amount of funding to be requested? \$ _____. Please attach a summary budget.
8. Do you have, or are you seeking, other funding for the project? _____ Projects that provide at least 20% in matching funds are priorities for funding.
9. Does the project serve *severely disadvantaged communities* (i.e., with median household incomes of less than 60 percent of the statewide average)?
10. Would conservation corps services be appropriate for your project (if appropriate)?

Further Information

All CRCA Grant Program documents, are available for review at www.cvmc.ca.gov. If you have questions, please contact Jim Karpiak, CVMC Executive Director at jkarpiak@cvmc.ca.gov, or Diana Rosas, Associate Director at drosas@cvmc.ca.gov, or call (760) 776-5026.

Exhibit C

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy



Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant Program

Funded by the State of California General Fund

Request for Proposals CRCA 2023-03: Wildfire Resilience Projects in Economically Disadvantaged Communities

November __, 2023

Pre-Application Deadline: March 2, 2024

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 776-5026
www.cvmc.ca.gov

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (the “Conservancy”) is pleased to offer up to \$2.0 million in local assistance grants as part of its latest request for proposals under its Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant Program (“Program”). The Program was created in 2021 and seeks to support programs that address climate adaptation and resilience or enhance access to outdoor recreation or education. Further details about the Program can be found in the Program Guidelines available on the Conservancy’s website. This RFP CRCA 2023-03 seeks to strengthen wildfire resilience in economically disadvantaged communities in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) or mountainous areas.

RFP Objectives

The Conservancy currently seeks applications for projects or programs that support economically disadvantaged or severely economically disadvantaged communities in reducing the risk of wildfires in WUI or mountainous areas. Grants may fund planning and/or implementation projects that address critical needs in those, including but not limited to the following:

- Threat assessments, mapping projects, biological and cultural surveys, development of restoration plans, fire or forest management plans or related environmental compliance and permitting;
- Creation and maintenance of shaded fuel breaks;
- Pre-fire management practices such as fuel load reduction, dead and dying tree removal and/or understory thinning;
- Removal of invasive plant species and the restoration of native species that provide benefits such as increasing biodiversity;
- Prescribed burns;
- Workforce development, training and certification programs in fire, forestry or habitat management;
- Improvement of water infrastructure to enhance firefighting or suppression capacity or development or evacuation alert systems;
- Acquisition of wildland equipment such as command vehicles or trailers, tractors, drones, woodchippers, portable pumps, backup generators, radios, hand tools, etc.; and
- Education or public outreach activities are designed to promote fire prevention and safety.

Grant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include local or state agencies, federally- or California state-recognized tribes, or nonprofit organizations that primarily serve economically disadvantaged communities. For the purposes of this RFP, “economically disadvantaged community” is defined as a community with a median household income less than 80% of the area median income or AML.

There is no minimum application amount, and the maximum is \$2.0 million. CEQA compliance will be required prior to the Conservancy's board acting on grants that are not otherwise exempt from CEQA review. The details of CEQA as it applies to each application will be discussed as part of the Pre-Application review.

Any project that fulfills one or more of the objectives of this RFP is eligible for consideration, but the Conservancy specifically encourages applications that:

- (a) Collaborate among agencies or organizations to enhance implementation capacity and have demonstrated experience in serving economically disadvantaged communities;
- (b) Serve areas that have historically experienced wildfires or that are otherwise documented to be at high risk;
- (c) Meet more than one objective of the RFP; or
- (d) Maximize community and resident participation.

Projects on federally owned land are NOT eligible.

Application Process and Key Dates

Steps	Task	Deadlines
1	Applicant Submits Pre-Application (attached below)	Friday, Mar. 2, 2024
2	CVMC Notifies Applicant of Full Application Eligibility Status	Friday, Mar. 9, 2024
3	Applicant Submits Full Application	12:00 Noon Friday, Apr. 13, 2024

4	CVMC Reviews and Scores Full Applications	March - April, 2024
6	CVMC Conservancy Board Considers Applications.	May or July, 2024
7	Grantee Commences Grant Project Upon Grant Agreement Execution	

Applications will be reviewed, scored and ranked in accordance with the competitive process established by the Guidelines, with final awards to be made by the Conservancy Board. The Board reserves the discretion to award available funds in this round of funding based on the strength of responses to this RFP. The Conservancy reserves the right to modify this RFP by written addendum posted to our website and emailed to our RFP list. Awards are conditioned on the continuing availability of funding under the State Budget.

Further Information

All CRCA Grant Program documents, are available for review at www.cvmc.ca.gov. If you have questions, please contact Jim Karpiak, CVMC Executive Director at jkarpiak@cvmc.ca.gov, or Diana Rosas, Associate Director at drosas@cvmc.ca.gov, or call (760) 776-5026.

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy



CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM

Funded by the California General Fund

Grant Proposal Pre-Application Form

Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 776-5026
www.cvmc.ca.gov

We fully understand that your project information may be preliminary and subject to change. Our main purpose is to understand what you hope to accomplish with program funding. Pre-application submissions will be reviewed by CVMC staff and may follow up with questions, comments, clarifications as needed. Applicants whose projects are deemed eligible will be notified with further instructions as to completing the full application narrative.

1. Name of Applicant(s):
2. Representative and contact information:
3. Please attach a brief, one-page project description that summarizes key objectives, work tasks and deliverables.
4. Was the project part of any other project that has undergone environmental review under CEQA or NEPA? _____ If so, please identify the project and type of environmental document.
5. Please attach a map that depicts the location of the project or the areas to be served.
6. Does the applicant own the project site? _____ If not, how will you achieve site control?
7. Tentative amount of funding to be requested? \$ _____. Please attach a summary budget.
8. Do you have, or are you seeking, other funding for the project? _____ Projects that provide at least 20% in matching funds are priorities for funding.
9. Does the project serve *severely disadvantaged communities* (i.e., with median household incomes of less than 60 percent of the statewide average)?
10. Would conservation corps services be appropriate for your project (if appropriate)?

Further Information

All CRCA Grant Program documents, are available for review at www.cvmc.ca.gov. If you have questions, please contact Jim Karpiak, CVMC Executive Director at jkarpiak@cvmc.ca.gov, or Diana Rosas, Associate Director at drosas@cvmc.ca.gov, or call (760) 776-5026.

ATTACHMENT 4 – November 13, 2023

Agenda Item 5.3 Adoption of Resolution 2023-17 consenting to and approving the donation by the Friends of the Desert Mountains of one parcel in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

BACKGROUND

The Friends of the Desert Mountains (Friends) has requested the Conservancy's consent to donate 280+/-acres (APN 686-110-021, the Property) located in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area, acquired with Conservancy grant funds, to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (the Tribe) for the purpose of conserving natural habitat and open space and protecting historic and cultural resources. The land is located directly adjacent to reservation land on one side and tribal allottee land on another. (See attached map). The Friends purchased the Property in 2011 using a Proposition 84 grant in the amount of \$260,610.67. Under the grant agreement between the Conservancy and the Friends, the Friends are required to obtain the consent of the Conservancy prior to any transfer of the Property and to repay the grant or portion of it to the extent the Friends receive any compensation for the Property. In this case, the Friends are donating the Property to the Tribe and will not receive any payment.

DISCUSSION

It has been the Conservancy's practice over the years to support its grantees in transferring conservation lands to other entities to facilitate more efficient maintenance and monitoring of larger areas of conservation land and relieve those grantees of management responsibility and liability. This is particularly important for land, such as the Property, that is ancestral tribal territory and is known to contain cultural artifacts, where a tribe is willing to take over stewardship of the land. Moreover, under the Governor's 2020 Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands, it is the explicit policy of the State to promote California tribes' co-management of, or access to tribal lands and also to work cooperatively with tribes seeking to acquire lands. This donation fulfills all of those objectives.

Generally, where the land to be transferred will be held for conservation purposes consistent with Conservancy grant, the Conservancy has not required that the grantee sell the land (i.e., in order to repay the grant) and simply forgives the grant. Here, the Agua Caliente Tribal Council adopted a resolution stating that the Property will be used for protection of wildlife habitat and cultural resources, will be administered by the Tribe as an addition to the existing Tribal Reserve, and will be open to the public subject to

restrictions necessary to protect artifacts and habitat values (see attached Tribal Resolution 59-23. Importantly, the Tribe has a large professional staff experienced in managing land that is significant for cultural and habitat protection and used for limited recreational purposes.

As each of those purposes is a part of the Conservancy's mission and consistent with the terms of Proposition 84, the transfer of the Property to the Tribe will both improve efficiency in management and enhance its value in implementing the Conservancy's mission and Proposition 84 objectives.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the attached Resolution 2023-17 consenting to and approving the donation by the Friends of the Desert Mountains of 280 acres of land (APN 686-110-021) in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

Exhibit A

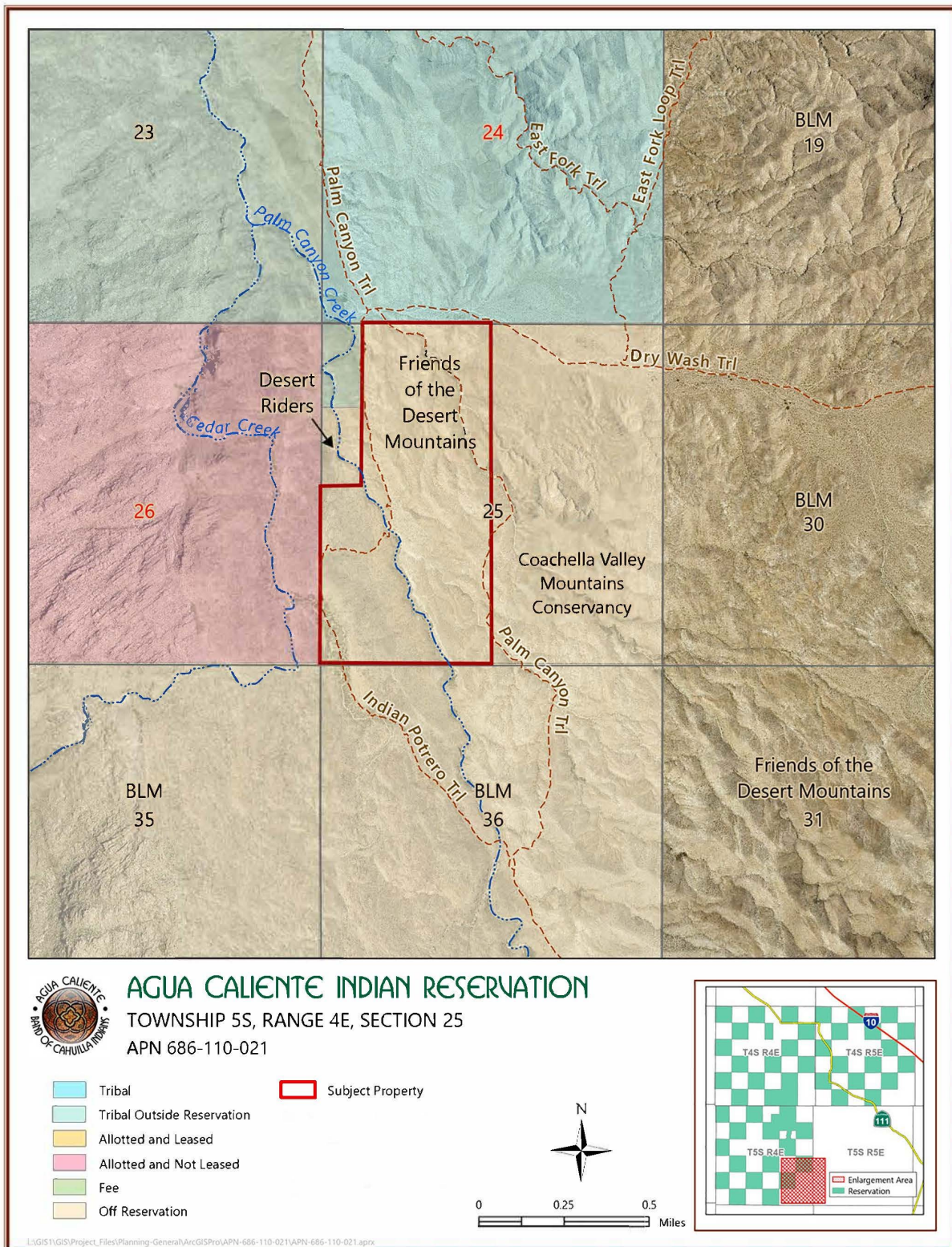


Exhibit A-1



Friends of the
Desert Mountains

51-500 Highway 74
P.O. Box 1281
Palm Desert, CA 92261

October 24, 2023

Mr. Jim Karpiak, Executive Director
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120
Palm Desert, CA 92260

RE: Request for Approval to transfer APN #686-110-021 to Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

Dear Jim,

This letter is a formal request by Friends of the Desert Mountains ("FODM") to the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy ("CVMC") for approval of the terms of transfer for one parcel (APN #686-110-021, the "Property"), consisting of approximately 280 acres, to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (the "Tribe"). FODM proposed to donate the land to the Tribe and will not receive payment in exchange. The Tribe has enacted a resolution agreeing to accept the Property for "the protection of wildlife habitat and other resources, preservation of open space, recreation, preservation of the native palms and other plants and animals native to the area, and the preservation in place or respectful public display of the archaeological and cultural resources of the acquired land".

The Property was purchased on March 2, 2011 using a CVMC Grant in the amount of \$280,610.76. Under Grant Agreement 60-2 between CVMC and FODM, FODM is required to obtain the consent of CVMC for any transfer, and to repay the grant or portion of it to the extent FODM receives any payment for the Property. As FODM is not receiving consideration for the transfer, we also request that the Conservancy release it from any liability for repayment of the grant.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Tammy Martin
Executive Director

A 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation
Federal Tax identification #33-0241242

Phone: (760)568-9918
Fax: (760)568-9908

Email: Friends@DesertMountains.org
Website: www.DesertMountains.org

Exhibit B



AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF CAHUILLA INDIANS TRIBAL COUNCIL

REID D. MILANOVICH CHAIRMAN • CANDACE PATENCIO ANDERSON VICE CHAIRMAN
SAVANA R. SAUBEL SECRETARY-TREASURER • JOHN R. PRECKWINKLE III MEMBER • VIRGINIA SIVA-GILLESPIE MEMBER

Resolution No. 59-23

WHEREAS, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians ("**Tribe**") is a federally-recognized Indian tribe governing itself, through a duly elected Tribal Council, according to a Constitution and By-Laws and exercising sovereign authority over the lands of the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation (the "**Reservation**"); and

WHEREAS, the Tribe wishes to acquire land from the Friends of the Desert Mountains (Friends) for the purpose of conserving natural habitat and open space and preserving and protecting the historic and cultural resources located there; and

WHEREAS, the one (1) parcel to be acquired is located adjacent to the exterior boundaries of the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation; and

WHEREAS, the one (1) parcel to be acquired is identified by Assessor's Parcel Number as follows: 686-110-021 and is shown on Exhibit "A" (the "**Property**"); and

WHEREAS, the Property is being transferred without consideration as a donation by the Friends and the Tribe is acquiring the Property as an addition to the existing Tribal Reserve lands identified in the Land Use Ordinance of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, which is land set aside for recreation and the preservation of open space and cultural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Property will be used for protection of wildlife habitat and other resources, preservation of open space, recreation, preservation of the native palms and other plants and animals native to the area, and the preservation in place or respectful public display, at the option of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, of the archaeological and cultural resources of the lands; and

WHEREAS, the Property will be administered by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians as an addition to the existing Tribal Reserve lands established by Section 3(b) of the Act of September 21, 1959 (73 Stat. 603, P.L. 86-339); and

WHEREAS, the Property will be open to the public, subject to reasonable restrictions such as those presently in effect for the above existing Tribal Reserve lands.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Tribal Council of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, that the Tribal Council hereby approves the acquisition of the Property for the purposes stated herein, namely, the protection of wildlife habitat and other resources, preservation of open space, recreation, preservation of the native palms and other plants and animals native to the area, and the preservation in place or respectful public display of the archaeological and cultural resources of the acquired land.

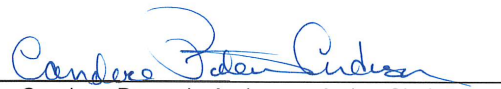
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Tribal Council of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians that the Chief Planning Officer, or her designee, is hereby authorized to (i) prepare, execute, and



Resolution No. 59-23
Page 2 of 2


deliver any and all documents which she may deem necessary or advisable in order to consummate the purchase and acquisition of the Properties; and (ii) take whatever other steps that are necessary to carry out, give effect to, and comply with the terms and intent of this Resolution, including, but not limited to (a) initiating revisions to the zoning map or Chapter 9.04 of the Agua Caliente Tribal Code, or (b) initiating a fee-to-trust application and taking any and all steps to consummate the same in accordance with Section 5 of the Indian Reorganization Act ("**IRA**") (25 U.S.C. § 5108) and its implementing regulations, or (c) initiating a reservation proclamation and taking any and all steps to consummate the same in accordance with Section 7 of the IRA (25 U.S.C. § 5110) and its implementing regulations.

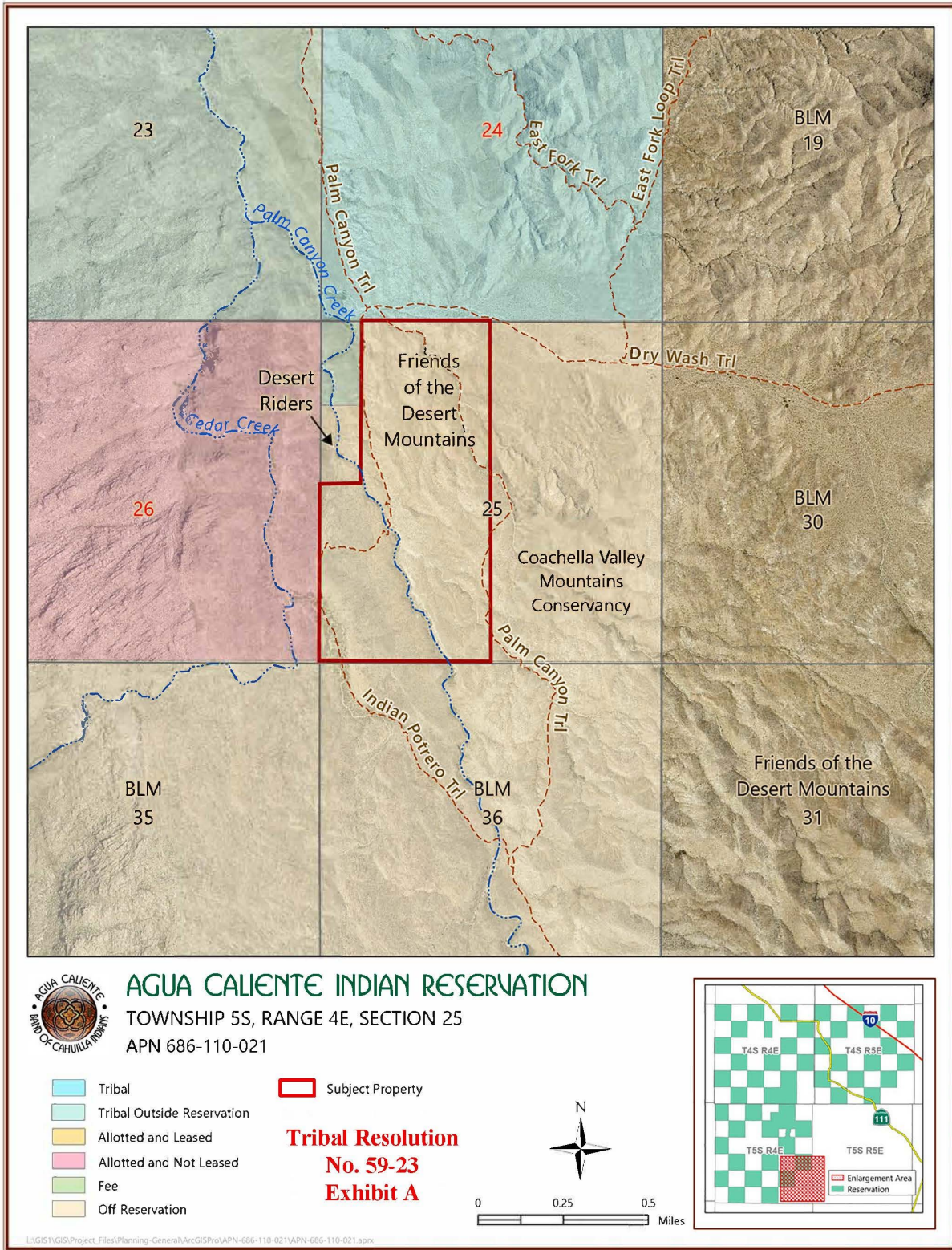
DATED: October 24, 2023


Candace Patencio Anderson, Acting Chairman

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned, the Secretary of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, hereby certify that the Tribal Council is composed of five members of whom 4 constituting a quorum, were present at a meeting whereof duly called and noticed, convened and held this 24th day of October, 2023; that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at such meeting by the affirmative vote of 3-0-0 members and that said resolution has not been rescinded or amended in any way.


Savana R. Saubel, Secretary-Treasurer



**RESOLUTION 2023-17 OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE
COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
ADOPTED IN REGULAR SESSION
NOVEMBER 13, 2023**

**CONSENTING TO AND APPROVING THE DONATION
BY THE FRIENDS OF THE DESERT MOUNTAINS
OF ONE PARCEL IN THE SANTA ROSA AND
SAN JACINTO MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION AREA
TO THE AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF CAHUILLA INDIANS**

WHEREAS, Public Resources Code Section 33501 created the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) for the purpose, among other things, of acquiring and holding, in perpetual open space, mountainous lands surrounding the Coachella Valley and natural community conservation lands, upon approval of a Natural Community Conservation Plan, for the protection of natural and cultural resources and the public's enjoyment thereof; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 33601(e), the Conservancy operates a grant program funded by Proposition 84 that provides funding for nonprofit organization to purchase conservation lands with the Coachella Valley; and

WHEREAS, the Friends of the Desert Mountains (Friends) is a nonprofit organization that received a Conservancy grant of \$280,610.67 of Proposition 84 funds (the Grant) pursuant to Conservancy Resolution 2008-17, which was used to purchase several properties, including the 280 acres site located in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area and identified as APN 686-110-021 (the Property), for conservation; and

WHEREAS, the Friends acquired the Property on March 2, 2011, and have managed it for conservation continuously since then; and

WHEREAS, the Property is located directly adjacent to Tribal Reserve land of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (the Tribe) on one side and to tribal allottee land on another; and

WHEREAS, the Tribe wishes to acquire the Property for protection of wildlife habitat and cultural resources, and the Tribe plans to administer the Property as an addition to the existing Tribal Reserve in accordance with its Tribal Council Resolution 59-23, enacted October 24, 2023 (the Tribal Resolution), which states that the Property is being acquired for such purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Friends wish to donate the Property to the Tribe for management in accordance with the Tribal Resolution, and the Friends will receive no payment for the Property; and

WHEREAS, the transfer of the Property to the Tribe (i) implements the policy of the State of California to promote tribal co-management of, or access to ancestral tribal lands and work cooperatively with tribes seeking to acquiring such lands; (ii) facilitates more efficient maintenance and monitoring of a large area of conservation land; and (iii) will better preserve the cultural artifacts and history of the Property due to the Tribe's expertise in such matters; and

WHEREAS, the Conservancy wishes to consent to the donation of the Property by Friends to the Tribe.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved in regular session of the Governing Board of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy that the Board consents to and approves the transfer without consideration by the Friends of the Desert Mountains of the Property to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, subject to the conditions that:

1. The Property shall be managed in accordance with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Tribal Council Resolution 59-23, adopted October 24, 2023;
2. The Friends shall not be required to repay the Grant because no compensation is being paid to the Friends by the Tribe in exchange for the donation; and
3. The Friends will agree to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Conservancy and the State of California, their contractors, officers, directors, agents or employees against any and all claims, liability, demands, damages, debts, judgments, costs, or expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, arising out of or in any way connected to the Conservancy's consent and approval of the sale of the Property; and

BE IT FURTHER resolved that upon transfer of the Property to the Tribe without consideration to the Friends, the Grant Agreement shall terminate and the Friends shall be released of any obligations thereunder; and

BE IT FURTHER resolved the Board hereby authorizes its Executive Director, or in his absence the Board Chairman, to execute any and all documents necessary to affect the consent and approval of the transfer of the Property and termination of the Grant.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Governing Board, held on this 13th day of November 2023, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

Gary Gardner, Chair
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy

ATTACHMENT 5 – November 13, 2023

Agenda Item 5.4 Adoption of Resolution 2023-18 in Support of the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and expansion of Joshua Tree National Park.

OVERVIEW

The Conservancy has a history of working in collaboration with local partners to support the creation or expansion of national parks or monuments in and around the Coachella Valley, including Joshua Tree National Park, the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains and the Sand to Snow National Monuments. On September 21, 2023, Congressman Raul Ruiz introduced H.R. 5660, the *Chuckwalla National Monument Establishment and Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act of 2023*, a bill to “provide for the protection of natural and cultural resources, Tribal collaborative management, sustainable economic development, enhanced recreation, and equitable access on Federal lands in eastern Imperial and Riverside counties, California, and for other purposes” (the Legislation). The Legislation would conserve federal public lands in Riverside and Imperial Counties for present and future generations to enjoy. It would designate a new Chuckwalla National Monument abutting the southern edge of Joshua Tree National Park and permanently protect recreational access to popular places like the Mecca Hills and Orocopia Mountains. (See Map on Exhibit A.) The Congressman and a coalition of local non-profits and other organizations called the Protect California Deserts Campaign (the Coalition) are working to enact the Legislation that would honor and recognize the cultural histories of Indigenous peoples, enhance access to world-class nature for local residents and visitors, protect fragile desert wildlife by providing connectivity between existing protected lands, and help boost local economies.

National monuments can be established in two ways: through federal legislation or, more commonly, through presidential use of the Antiquities Act. Should the legislation not be successfully, the Congressman and the Coalition will ask President Biden to establish the Chuckwalla National Monument through executive action, as occurred when the Sand to Snow National Monument was created in 2015. As part of this effort, the Coalition has requested that the Conservancy approve a resolution supporting the creation of the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and expansion of Joshua Tree National Park, through the Legislation or, if necessary, presidential designation of the new national monument.

DISCUSSION

The Legislation would protect deserts, mountains, and woodlands spanning from the eastern Coachella Valley almost to the Colorado River (see attached map). The new monument would safeguard World War II historical sites, the Bradshaw Trail and other designated routes, cultural landscapes, and vital habitats for a diverse array of species, including chuckwalla, desert bighorn sheep, and desert tortoise. The Legislation would:

- Establish a Chuckwalla National Monument stretching from the Mecca Hills in the west to approximately 10 miles west of the Arizona border in Riverside and Imperial Counties; this would include protection for a wide array of cultural, historic and natural resources;
- Expand Joshua Tree National Park in the Eagle Mountain area;
- Require an inter-agency study of recreation needs on public lands in the region; especially under-resourced but popular day-use sites; and
- Honor the homelands of the Cahuilla, Chemehuevi, Mojave, Quechan, and Serrano peoples.

By law, the Chuckwalla National Monument designation would only apply to federal public lands. It would not affect existing lawful uses of private property, rights of way, utility corridors or infrastructure. The Joshua Tree National Park expansion would include only those lands identified in a 2016 assessment by the National Park Service for inclusion in the Park. The expansion would cover only Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in the area, not privately owned lands. It also would not affect a proposed pump storage project and other existing or proposed activities on private lands.

The Legislation is compatible with and complementary to both the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). The previously designated national monuments in the region that overlap with the CVMSHCP, the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument and the Sand to Snow National Monument, provide opportunities for ongoing collaboration and cooperative management. Like other national monuments in the region, this new national monument would ultimately result in the development of a management plan for the public lands with significant collaboration with local, state, and federal partners and input from the public.

The Legislation was also crafted to complement the goals of the DRECP. All areas prioritized for renewable energy development were purposefully excluded from the proposed national monument boundaries. The Coalition has been working with local and

state agencies to refine the boundaries of the proposed national monument and it is possible that further changes may be negotiated.

National monuments generally permit existing recreational uses to continue and in fact provide a better experience for users with increased signage for improved access and interpretation. OHV use is permissible within national monuments on legal routes and within designated areas.

The Legislation will benefit Riverside and Imperial Counties in several ways, including:

- Protecting crucial plant and wildlife habitat and migration corridors;
- Safeguarding indigenous sites, landscapes of importance, and other significant cultural resources;
- Protecting important historic sites and landscapes;
- Enhancing equitable and sustainable recreation access to federal public lands;
- Boosting local economies by attracting visitors (see attachment on economic benefits); and
- Promoting tourism and recreation which are an essential part of the desert region's economy.

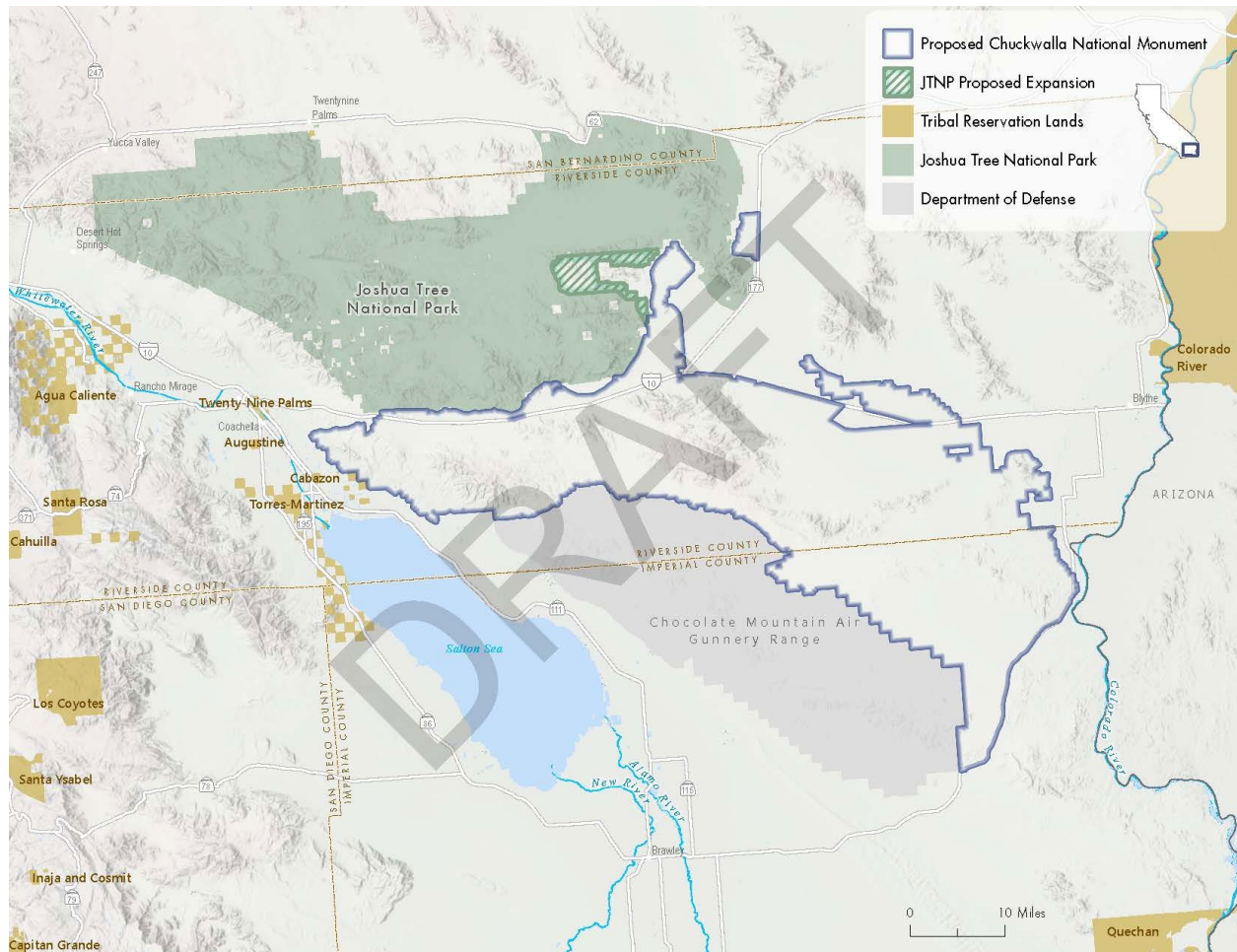
The National Monument designation would preserve and enhance the extensive recreational and environmental education opportunities in this spectacular landscape. Monument designation would attract outdoor recreation enthusiasts, translating into dollars for the local economies of the Coachella and Palo Verde Valleys and their surrounding communities.

All the lands within this Legislation are within the 25th Congressional District, which is represented by Congressman Ruiz. CNRA Secretary Wade Crowfoot has endorsed the effort. The coalition of organizations supporting the Protect California Deserts proposal is currently reaching out to local elected officials, community leaders and stakeholders to solicit their input and support. Local supporters include Friends of the Desert Mountains, Desert Trails Coalition, California Audubon, CactusToCloud Institute, Council of Mexican Federations in North America (COFEM), the Sierra Club, Mojave Desert Land Trust, Native American Land Conservancy, Wildlands Conservancy, and National Parks Conservation Association among several others.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Adoption of Resolution 2023-18 in support of the Chuckwalla National Monument Establishment and Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act of 2023, or in the alternative, the designation of the Chuckwalla National Monument through executive action pursuant to the Antiquities Act.

Location Map



**RESOLUTION 2023-18 OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE
COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
ADOPTED IN REGULAR SESSION
NOVEMBER 13, 2023**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY IN
SUPPORT OF THE CHUCKWALLA NATIONAL MONUMENT ESTABLISHMENT
AND JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK EXPANSION ACT OF 2023**

WHEREAS, Public Resources Code Section 33501 created the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy for the purpose, among other things, of acquiring and holding, in perpetual open space, mountainous lands surrounding the Coachella Valley and natural community conservation lands, and to provide for the protection of natural and cultural resources and the public's enjoyment thereof; and

WHEREAS, the Conservancy has a history of working in collaboration with local agencies to support the creation or expansion of national parks or monuments in the Coachella Valley, including the creation of Joshua Tree National Park and the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains and the Sand to Snow National Monuments; and

WHEREAS, on September 21, 2023, Congressman Raul Ruiz introduced H.R. 5660, the *Chuckwalla National Monument Establishment and Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act of 2023*, a bill to "provide for the protection of natural and cultural resources, Tribal collaborative management, sustainable economic development, enhanced recreation, and equitable access on Federal lands in eastern Imperial and Riverside counties, California, and for other purposes" (the Legislation); and

WHEREAS, the Congressman and a coalition of local non-profits and other organizations called the Protect California Deserts Campaign (the Coalition) are working to enact the Legislation to conserve federal public lands in Riverside and Imperial Counties as a new Chuckwalla National Monument that would border the southern edge of Joshua Tree National Park and permanently protect recreational access to popular places like the Mecca Hills and Orocopia Mountains; and

WHEREAS, the proposed boundaries of the new National Monument are compatible with and complementary to both the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), and the Coalition has worked with state and local agencies and districts to ensure that the ultimate boundaries reflect their policy concerns; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and expansion of Joshua Tree National Park contain spectacular public lands that are a scenic, environmental, economic, cultural, and recreational resource both locally as well as across our state; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and expansion of Joshua Tree National Park support year-round habitats for diverse wildlife such as desert bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, a wide variety of birds, and many other species; and

WHEREAS, publicly owned and federally managed desert lands constitute a public wildland resource of extraordinary and inestimable value and deserve to be protected for present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, enacting the Legislation would secure permanent protection for the Chuckwalla National Monument and expand Joshua Tree National Park to secure the quality of life and recreational opportunities directly related to our public lands for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, multiple studies have shown that National Monuments create jobs and support positive economics for communities nearby; and

WHEREAS, these areas contain significant cultural, archeological, historic, and scientific values worthy of permanent protection; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy hereby affirms its support for the Legislation, or if that cannot be enacted timely, the establishment via executive action of the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conservancy calls on Congress to enact the Legislation, or in the alternative calls on the President to create the Chuckwalla National Monument under the Antiquities Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conservancy hereby directs the staff to send a copy of this resolution to United States President Joe Biden, U.S. Senators Alex Padilla and Laphonza Butler and Representatives Raul Ruiz and Ken Calvert.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Board this 13th day of November 2023, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

Gary Gardner, Chairman
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy

ATTACHMENT 6 –November 13, 2023

Agenda Item 5.5 Presentation on CVMC social media.

The Conservancy has never had a Social Media presence, but with society's increasing dependence on social media, that fact cuts us off from many opportunities to reach the public. At this meeting, staff will make a short presentation on the work we are doing to launch a social media program.

BACKGROUND

Social Media websites and applications enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking. Social Media can categorically be defined as Content, Community, Conversation, Curation, and Collaboration. Co-opting social media platforms to strategically support the mission of the Conservancy. Social media platforms provide direct access to non-profits and government agencies across the board, the communities we serve and our longtime partners and collaborators, as well maintaining a continuous engagement practice on and offline.

Social media platforms can serve as an extension of our communication, engagement, and public relations efforts to increase the Conservancy's overall reach. Having a strategic plan to the content we create, and share is pivotal to the success of online presence. Strategically, this content would consist of ongoing projects, grants opportunities, educational posts on habitats or species, and milestones the Conservancy has reached.

A strategic approach to the visual content would highlight and show the impact that projects bring to the communities we serve. This can be shown through various methods such as the amount of funding that is being provided to the communities, the type of projects that are being funded (capital, infrastructure, planning or restoration) and the perceived benefits that they will bring to the community. Completed projects can be showcased to show resiliency, the effectiveness of the grant program and how the funding has had a long-term impact on communities. For the Coachella Valley region, this would highlight the work over the years and partnerships that have been built along the process.

On a larger scale, social media can play a pivotal role in showing how local projects are contributing to statewide goals and priorities such as 30x30, outdoors for all, protecting biodiversity, building climate resilience, and expanding nature-based solutions. Similarly, our social media program will support and highlight the work of other conservancies around the state and highlight the effectiveness of our work in engaging, coordinating, and collaborating with communities to achieve the state's goals and priorities.

ATTACHMENT 7 – November 13, 2023

Agenda Item 6.1 Written Reports from Staff

ACQUISITION AND LAND MANAGEMENT UPDATES

CVCC/CVMC/FODM Management – The Conservancy continues to perform monitoring inspections on properties owned by the Conservancy, and we send reminders to grantees where we have provided local assistance grants in support of the CVMSHCP. In particular, FODM is working to catch up to its monitoring and reporting obligations required under its grants with CVMC.

COACHELLA VALLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION (CVCC) ACQUISITION MANAGER PROGRAM - The Conservancy continues to contract with the CVCC as Acquisition Manager. Current acquisition efforts include:

Long Canyon Conservation Area: In June, the CVCC board approved the acquisition of a property consisting of 10.6+/- acres, escrow closed September 8th.

Tax Default Properties: In October 2022, CVCC applied to purchase 48 tax defaulted parcels. In February 2023, CVCC received notice from RC regarding the tax sale, CVCC is awaiting purchase price quotes for parcels that it applied for and have not been redeemed. The acquisition process through the tax default program has proven to take anywhere from 3 to 5 years from the application to when the properties are recorded under the vesting of the applicant.

Appraisals Completed and/or in Process:

1. Cabazon Conservation Area – In February 2023, an appraisal was completed on 12 parcels, consisting of 970.90+/- acres, representing separate ownerships. Contingent offer letters were sent to property owners, but none have been accepted yet. Appraisal expires March 2024.
2. Long Canyon Conservation Area – In March 2023, an appraisal was completed on 26 parcels, consisting of 354.82+/- acres, representing separate ownerships. Contingent offer letters were sent to property owners. One owner of two parcels (totaling 10.6+/- acres) accepted the offer and the CVCC board approved the acquisition in June. Appraisal expires April 2024.
3. Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area – In February 2023, an appraisal was completed on 7 parcels, consisting of 353.55+/- acres, representing separate ownerships. Contingent offer letters were sent to

property owners, but none have been accepted yet. Appraisal Expires March 2024.

4. Willow Hole Conservation Area - In June 2023, an appraisal was completed on 49 parcels, consisting of 312.41+/- acres, representing separate ownerships. Contingent offer letters were sent to property owners, three separate owners consisting of 59.96+/- acres combined accepted CVCC's offer and are in the process of signing Purchase and Sale Agreements to take to the CVCC board on September 14th. Appraisal expires July 2024.

PROPOSITION 1 GRANT PROGRAM - PROJECT STATUS

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

Infrastructure Grant – Section 33 Groundwater Monitoring Wells Project:

Construction of the three wells was completed on August 1st. The tribe staff is preparing final report and reimbursement request before closing out the project.

City of Indio

Infrastructure Grant – Jackson St. and Ave. 50 Flood Prevention Project: The city is preparing engineering plans, right of way acquisitions, and procurement of qualified contractors before construction can begin. Construction is expected to begin February 2024.

Coachella Valley Water District

Infrastructure Grant – DHS and Mission Creek Subbasins Groundwater Monitoring

Wells Project: Drilling and construction of monitoring well 1 was completed in September to a total depth of 310ft below ground surface. The water pumped from this well was found to be abnormally hot which would compromise the structural character of the well material and possibly cause well failure under development stresses. CVWD was advised to do no further development on the well, the decision was made to retain the well as a water level data point moving forward. Drilling of monitoring well 2 began in September to a total depth of 410ft below ground surface. After reviewing monitoring logs, the presence of and depth of water was unclear but strongly implied that the borehole that was drilled had not encountered groundwater. As a result, CVWD was advised to not move forward with construction of monitoring well 2 and instead move forward with borehole deconstruction. CVWD is working on a complete progress report with more details on CVWD plans to ensure the project is completed as per the grant agreement.

Southern California Mountains Foundation Restoration Grant – Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration Project: The UCC of the Inland Empire completed 6.8 acres of

tamarisk removal during the 2022 season, for a total of 11.41 acres of initial treatment and 2.26 acres of re-treatment. The goal is to complete 60 acres of initial treatment and 15 acres of re-treatment by the term of the grant. The next season's field work or "spike" days are being scheduled for November 2023 through January 2024.

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – San Felipe Creek Desert Pupfish Pond Project: The site and plans for the new pond have been approved, construction activities of the pond commenced in October with an expected completion date by end of November. Once construction is complete, aging of the pond will occur before introducing pupfish into the refugia.

The Wildlands Conservancy

Planning Grant - Whitewater Preserve Flood Control Improvement Project: TWC's consultants have revised project permits in response to the Wildlife Agencies comments during the Joint Project Review process. The schedule of the project has been delayed due to the effects of Hurricane Hilary, and revised project permits are being submitted in the first week of November; agency review and coordination is then expected to take 2-4 months.

PROPOSITION 1 GRANT PROGRAM – COMPLETED PROJECTS

Center for Natural Lands Management - Restoration Grant - Desert Pupfish Refuge Habitat Restoration Project

Center for Natural Lands Management – Restoration Grant – Dos Palmas Controlled Core Marsh Burn and Restoration Project

City of Coachella - Planning Grant - Citywide Stormwater Resource Plan Project

City of Palm Springs – Restoration Grant - Tahquitz Creek-Triangle Parcel Restoration

City of Palm Springs – Restoration Grant - San Jacinto Mountains Watershed Restoration

Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District – Infrastructure Grant – Water Management System Project

Coachella Valley Conservation Commission – Acquisition Grant - Snowcreek and Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Watershed Acquisition

Coachella Valley Conservation Commission - Restoration Grant - Willow Hole Canyon & Wash Restoration Project

Coachella Valley Conservation Commission - Restoration Grant - Wetlands Restoration, Tamarisk Control and Rail Habitat Enhancement at North Shore Ranch Project

Coachella Valley Resource Conservation District – Infrastructure Grant - Root Water Project

Coachella Valley Water District – Infrastructure Grant – Groundwater Monitoring Wells Project

Department of Fish & Wildlife – Infrastructure Grant - Dos Palmas Reserve Well Improvement

Desert Recreation District – Infrastructure Grant – Flood Control Project at North Shore Park

Desert Recreation District - Infrastructure Grant - Flood Control Project at Oasis Park

Friends of the Desert Mountains - Restoration Grant - Palm Canyon Restoration Project

Friends of the Desert Mountains – Restoration Grant – Santa Rosa Wilderness Restoration Project

Mission Springs Water District – Infrastructure Grant - Willow Hole Groundwater Monitoring Wells

Palm Springs Cemetery District – Restoration Grant - Invasive Species Removal Project

Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians – Restoration Grant – Santa Rosa Horse Creek Dam and Wetlands Restoration Project

Southern California Mountains Foundation - Restoration Grant - Dos Palmas Restoration Project

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens - Restoration Grant - Desert Pupfish Refugia and Native Habitat Restoration Project

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens - Restoration Grant - Dos Palmas-Middle Salt Creek Restoration Project

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians – Planning and Restoration Grant - Phase 1-Salton Sea Wetlands Restoration

Torres Martínez Desert Cahuilla Indians – Planning and Restoration Grant - Phase 2-Salton Sea Wetlands Restoration

The Wildlands Conservancy – Planning Grant - Planning & Feasibility for Whitewater Preserve Flood Control

University of California/Riverside – Planning Grant - Salton Sea Crust and Water Quality Remediation Project

PROPOSITION 68 GRANT PROGRAM – PROJECT STATUS

City of Coachella – Planning Grant – *Environmental Analysis for its Grapefruit Boulevard Urban Greening Project*. The City has retained Terra Nova as its consultant, which began work in mid-April 2023. Work is scheduled for completion in Spring, 2024.

City of Indio – Infrastructure Grant – *Parking Lot Improvements at the Indio Hills Badlands Trail*. The design phase is well underway and is expected to be completed by December 2023, and then the City will move to the bidding process.

Center for Lands Management – *Restroom Replacement Project*. The project is on schedule and underway. Asbestos testing is underway, the M54 Clivus restroom has been ordered, and the contract with a plumber is being negotiated.

Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority – Infrastructure Grant - *Existing Trails Project*. The project has proceeded under budget but has encountered staffing difficulties as it approaches its scheduled completion date on December 31, 2023. CVDMRCA is going to restructure the project and coordinate it as part of its conservation land management services program, which is funded by a CVMC CRCA grant. The remaining balance of this grant (approximately \$100,000). Will become available for new grant awards.

Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority – Planning Grant – *Trails Environmental Assessment*. Aspen Environmental completed the Environmental Assessment and submitted it to BLM last February. BLM has been unable to review the document or even commit to a schedule for doing so due to staffing shortages, so the consultant is revising the splitting the assessment into separate CEQA and NEPA documents, which will allow the Conservancy to approve a Mitigated Negative Declaration under CEQA in early 2024 and then begin work on 4 of the 6 trails thereafter.

Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – Infrastructure Grant – *Greening the Desert Project*. Car chargers: Installation of the chargers is in progress and should be completed before the end of November. Signage for the East Valley Signs of Nature component has been delayed due to errors by the fabricator; they are being re-done and the grantee hopes to get them installed in December 2023.

Living Desert Zoo and Gardens - Infrastructure Grant - *Signs of Nature Project - Connecting DHS to Nearby Nature*. The text and design for the signs is ready and will proceed with plans for installation in early 2024.

Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – Infrastructure Grant - *East Valley Pollinator Pathway Demonstration Project*. The grantee has the plants and the curriculum together for the schools to begin using the materials to teach about the plants shortly. The first of the gardens will begin planting in the first week of November.

Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – Infrastructure Grant – *Conservation Greenhouse Project*. Permit applications for the emergency water line for the fire hydrant and the construction have been submitted to the City of Indian Wells. Grantee is cautiously optimistic that this will be approved in the next month. If so, excavation of the line for the hydrant will begin immediately. The greenhouse is a duplicate of another that the grantee previously installed, so that process should be quick and easy.

Riverside County Parks and Open Space District – Planning Grant – *Coachella Valley Regional Park Feasibility Study*. The Contract with the consultant was approved by the County Board October 17 and a project kickoff meeting will be scheduled in early November.

PROPOSITION 68 GRANT PROGRAM – COMPLETED PROJECTS

Center for Natural Lands Management – Infrastructure Grant – C.V. Preserve Fencing Grant.

Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority – Planning, Design and Infrastructure Grants – Shumway Restroom and Pavilion Improvements.

Friends of the Desert Mountains – Planning Grant – National Monument Visitor Center Interpretive Improvements.

Friends of the Desert Mountains – Design Grant – Signage/Interpretive Improvements Project - National Monument Visitor Center.

Friends of the Desert Mountains – Planning Grant – C.V. Trails Facilities and Signage Inventory and Assessment Grant.

Kounkuey Design Initiative – Planning Grant – SDAC - Restoration of the Salton Sea State Recreation Area.

Oswit Land Trust – Planning Grant – *Biological Resources Assessment and Environmental Review for the Prescott Preserve.*

Shumway Ranch.Org – Planning Grants – Master Plan and Shumway Ranch Historic Structure Preservation Plan.

Southern California Mountains Foundation – Planning Grant – Concept Design and Strategic Plan for C.V. Conservation Corps Center Project.

CVMC FUND STATUS

The Conservancy's available funding balances are as follows:

Proposition 1	\$3,029,358.45
Proposition 68	\$3,839,004.42
Proposition 84	\$5,833,944.76
CRCA FY22/23	\$ 830,864.00
Wildfire Resilience FY 23/24	\$8,550,000.00
Total Remaining Funds	\$22,083,171.63

Coachella Valley Federal Endangered Species Act – Section 6 Grant Balances:

Last year Coachella Valley received a commitment of \$456,420 to partially fund a proposed acquisition adjacent to the Indio Hills Palms Conservation Area which is being spearheaded by the Oswit Land Trust. The project does not yet have an approved appraisal, so it is uncertain whether it will proceed. No applications for Coachella Valley projects are pending or in process due to a lack of sellers willing to participate in the program, which can take a year or more to complete.